

S
351.858 Montana. Dept. of
F2ugbh Fish, Wildlife,
1993 and Parks
Report to 53rd
Montana
Legislature

STATE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

FEB 12 1993

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY
1515 E. 6th AVE.
HELENA, MONTANA 59620

Report to 53rd Montana Legislature Upland Game Bird Habitat Enhancement

Prepared by
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
January 1993

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY
S 351.858 F2ugbh 1993 c.1
Report to 53rd Montana Legislature -uple



3 0864 00082464 2

January 1993

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS
UPLAND GAME BIRD HABITAT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

BACKGROUND

The 50th Montana State Legislature enacted SB 331 which established a pheasant enhancement program to be administered by the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and to provide funding through increased license fees. The act specified that \$2 from each resident game bird license and \$23 from each nonresident game bird license would be used to share in the cost of releasing pheasants into suitable habitat.

The 51st Montana State Legislature enacted SB 33 which amended SB 331 to provide funding for upland game bird habitat enhancement. This act added a provision to the original legislation which allowed unexpended funds remaining at the end of each fiscal year to be reverted for the purpose of developing, enhancing, and conserving upland game bird habitat in Montana.

Habitat enhancement efforts as addressed in the act were intended to include assistance to applicants in the establishment of suitable nesting cover, winter cover, and feeding areas through cost-sharing programs, leases, and conservation easements.

REVENUE

Average annual revenues generated for the upland game bird habitat program are approximately \$612,000 (Table 1). Over 80 percent of the revenues result from the sale of nonresident big game combination licenses (Class B-10) and nonresident game bird licenses (Class B-1). A summary of the account expenditures by year is shown in Table 2.

Table 1. Upland game bird habitat enhancement program revenue summary.

<u>License Year*</u>	<u>Revenue from Resident Licenses (Class A-1 and AAA)</u>	<u>Revenue from Nonresident Licenses (Class B-1 and B-10)</u>	<u>Total Revenues</u>
1987	\$120,722	\$510,370	\$631,092
1988	\$104,336	\$485,070	\$589,406
1989	\$101,810	\$495,949	\$597,759
1990	\$101,980	\$510,370	\$612,350
1991	\$102,638	\$527,459	\$630,097
1992**	\$ 97,000	\$517,500	\$614,500
TOTAL	\$628,486	\$3,046,718	\$3,675,204

*March 1 - February 28(29)

**Projected as of November, 1992

Table 2. Upland game bird habitat enhancement program Account 02113.

Upland Game Bird 02113	FY1988	FY1989	FY1990	FY1991	FY1992
Beginning Fund Balance		\$401,778	\$966,226	\$1,442,128	\$1,441,865
Prior Year Expenditures			(7,041)	0	(861)
Prior Year Revenue		(11,965)	231	(1,944)	(3,359)
Unreserved Fund Balance	0	\$389,813	\$959,416	\$1,440,184	\$1,437,645
Estimated Revenue	\$426,410	602,499	596,435	610,575	634,348
Interest @ 4.5%					34,315
Total Revenue			\$596,435	610,575	668,663
Funds Available	426,410	992,312	1,555,851	2,050,759	2,106,307
Expenditures:					
Wildlife	(24,632)	(26,086)	(113,723)	(608,893)	(756,533)
Overhead Assessment					
Total Expenditures	(24,632)	(26,086)	(113,723)	(608,893)	(756,533)
Ending Fund Balance	\$401,778	\$996,226	\$1,442,128	\$1,441,865	\$1,349,774

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since passage of SB 331, approximately 10,000 pheasants have been released as part of this program. The remainder of expenditures have resulted from habitat enhancement activities. These enhancement projects have included over 400 individual cooperators, mostly agricultural producers.

In addition, the Department has entered into over 33 agreements with county conservation districts, the Montana Salinity Control Association, local sportsmen's clubs, and chapters of Pheasants Forever, Inc. These agreements have enabled the Department to enlist the assistance of these organizations in utilizing program funds for upland bird habitat enhancement.

As of December 18, 1992, program funds had been used to develop upland game bird habitat on over 158,000 acres of land in Montana (Table 3). Projects have a duration of one to fifteen years, depending on the land management practices involved.

The largest number of acres affected through this program to date have come under the practices establishing nesting cover and range management. Nesting cover establishment has largely involved cost-sharing the installation of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) plantings with the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS). Range management improvements have involved fencing and water development to assist private and public land managers in establishing rotational grazing systems. In addition, to the CRP plantings, ASCS cost-sharing has been utilized wherever possible on other practices.

Of the over 400 contracts developed with individual land managers, approximately 370 occur in the eastern two-thirds of the state. Other detailed information relative to the upland game bird program can be obtained from the Wildlife Division of the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

Table 3. Total number of acres enhanced by land management practices as part of the upland game bird habitat enhancement program

<u>Practice Description</u>	<u>Total Number of Acres</u>
Shelterbelt tree/shrub plantings	7,141
Winter food/cover plots	9,840
Nesting cover established	62,372
Range management	78,624
Wetland restoration	31
TOTAL	158,008

